

## Archive Pieter Robert Boele van Hensbroek

The archive of Pieter Robert (Robby) Boele van Hensbroek was handed over to the Dutch Australian Cultural Centre in September 2025 by his son Andrew Boele van Hensbroek. It brings together an exceptional body of work spanning published scholarship, personal memoirs, political commentary, and correspondence. It reflects the perspective of a Dutch naval officer shaped by the Second World War, the upheavals of Indonesian independence, and the challenges of building a new life in Australia.

Boele's most substantial published output appeared in *Marineblad* in the 1990s. Here he revisited pivotal moments in Dutch and Indonesian wartime history: his review of the **1941 Visman Report**, which he considered a lost chance for the Netherlands to grant meaningful self-government; **De strijd in Nederlands-Indië 1941–1942**, where he argued that Allied command failures and neglect compounded Dutch difficulties; and **Het Nederlandse optreden in Indonesië 1945–1949. Verantwoord en eerbaar**, a controversial defence of Dutch actions in the turbulent years of independence, published alongside sharp editorial and scholarly responses. In these writings, Boele consistently criticised not only Dutch policy but also what he saw as the damaging roles of **the United States and, above all, the United Kingdom** in shaping the poor outcome of the 1945–50 period. To him, British and American calculations undermined the possibility of a federal solution and hastened the loss of Dutch influence in the Indies.

His **personal memoirs and lectures** add a vivid human dimension. *Belevenissen van P.R. Boele van Hensbroek, Adelborstenjaar 1938* and his 1996 lecture *De ervaringen van een adelborst gedurende de oorlog 1940–1942* recall his cadet years, the escape to England in 1940, service alongside the Royal Navy, and his deployment on Hr.Ms. Tromp in the East Indies before retreating to Australia. Written decades later in Brisbane, these works not only recount history but also reflect on discipline, morale, and the lessons he carried into civilian life and migration.

The archive also preserves **shorter essays, speeches, and memoir pieces**, including his NESWA memorial addresses, his eulogy for veterans, and *Some call it treason*, a striking recollection of a dinner in which Australian support for Dutch policy on West New Guinea was privately canvassed. His writings range into contemporary politics, touching on multiculturalism, immigration, and Dutch–Australian identity.

Alongside his own work, the archive includes texts by others that Boele valued or engaged with. A striking example is **Een Belanda Indo Tiga in Bandoeng (1940–46)** by Robert J. Claasen, an unpublished personal memoir of wartime Bandung. Even more prominent is his correspondence with **L.J. (Bart) Bredero**, son of Adriaan Hendrikus Bredero, founder of the Bredero construction company. After the war, Adriaan was labelled a collaborator — something Bart bitterly contested in his writings as an injustice to his family. Boele preserved these letters and Bredero's works (including *The Gentleman and the Ambulance*), which reflected similar concerns about memory, responsibility, and the narratives of Indonesia's independence.

The archive also contains Boele's **biographical sketch of Peter Tazelaar**, a fellow wartime naval cadet and resistance hero best known for his tuxedo-clad landing at Scheveningen in 1941 as part of Operation Contact Holland. Boele's recollection situates Tazelaar not only in the context of the famous "Soldier of Orange" exploits but also as a comrade who shared the formative naval training that shaped their generation.

Taken together, these publications and manuscripts chart a wide field: Dutch naval endurance in WWII, the bitter controversies of Indonesia's road to independence, Dutch–Australian postwar

connections, and the personal dimension of migration and memory. They reveal Boele's lifelong commitment to moral principle, his scepticism of great-power politics, and his determination to preserve a Dutch voice — critical, independent, and transnational — in the debates over war, empire, and migration.

## **Archive**

### **Eulogie Pieter Robert Boele van Hensbroek – Robby -(1930-2011)**

**Abstract from the family genealogy – Pieter Boele van Hensbroek** (Deposited at the [Stadsarchief Amsterdam](#))

**Marineblad juli/augustus 1990.** He references page 317 that covers a book review Oorlog en verzet in Nederlands Indie 1941-1949 (he underlines paras that he obviously thinks are important to him).

**Marineblad maart 1995** (3 copies). Page 86 article by Pieter: Het rapport Visman opgesteld door de commissie Visman 1941.

**Marineblad September 1995** (2 copies) Page 240 article by Pieter. De strijd in Nederlands-Indie 1941-1942 (De niet zo bekende feiten)

**Marineblad april 1996.** Page 112. Comments on the article in the September issue.

**Some call it treason.** Memories of a dinner party. Where a Dutch former diplomat (Mr Schuurman) requested the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs (the future Lord Casey) for the Australian support to the Netherlands to withdraw from Western New Guinea (Approx 1960). By P.R Boele van Hensbroek Brisbane Australia (1995)

### **The Dutch Consulate to Perth by W.Arriens**

### **Herdenkingstoespraak NESWA Dodenherdenking 1990**

**Het verhaal van Amerika en (vooral) Engeland** (regarding Indonesia)

### **A report on the NESWA veterans – 2001**

**Koninklijk Instituut voor de Marine. Enige populair staatrechtelijke aantekeningen Anno 1940** (2 copies)

**Toespraak ter gelegenheid van de Dodenherdenking door NESWA Queensland).** In de Riverside RSL Hall, 42 Oxlade Drive, New Farm op 5 mei 1998 door P.R. Boele van Hensbroek Luit.t/zee 1<sup>ste</sup> Klasse b.d (2 copies)

**Herinneringen aan generaals Nederlands Indie 1945 (Spoor, Thorpe, van Oyen, van Straten, Christison)** Verkorte uitgave van artikel geschreven door Jan Staal Kol.KLU. bd

**Het Nederlandse optreden in Indonesia 1945-1949. Verantwoord en eerbaar.** Het Rapport Visman door P.R.Boele van Hensbroek en Naschrift Redactie Marineblad door Dr.D.C.L.Schoonoord en Reactie op Naschrift, Het Britse Streven in Nederlands Indie. Correspondentie met Prof.Dr. Petra Groen januari 1996. (2 copies)

**De spirit van New York** W.G.Nazaat Report on the events of 9/11 (photocopy)

One page **“Bijlage 1 Contract tussen de Engelsen in India en de Vorst van het Massourse Rijk ong. 1790.** (photocopy)

**Article NRC 21/9/1983. De Jong deelt bedenkingen tegen de rol Van der Post in Indonesisch verzet.**

One page (photocopy). **The dismantling of the empires. By V.G.Klerman Leicester University Press.**

**High farce in the uproarious House 14/7/1998** (2 photocopies)

**Boekbespreking Allies in a Bind October 1997** (2 photocopies)

**“The barbarians” at the gates ---or inside them. 27/6/1998.** Comment article on multiculturalism, immigration and crime.

**A long punt on the unfavored one.** The Bulletin December 1997/ Political opinion piece re the Labor Party.

**Peter Tazelaar (adelborst)** written by Pieter Boele ( they both served at the Royal Navy during WWII)

Peter (Pieter) Tazelaar (1920–1993) was a Dutch resistance agent and former naval adelborst (midshipman). He’s best known for the 23 Nov 1941 Scheveningen landing—in a tuxedo under a wetsuit—to infiltrate occupied Holland as part of Operation Contact Holland with Erik Hazelhoff Roelfzema (“Soldier of Orange”). He later warned London the operation was likely compromised. He received the Militaire Willems-Orde (the Netherlands’ highest gallantry award) and other decorations.

**Een Belanda Indo Tiga in Bandoeng (media 1940 tot februari 1946) by Robert J.Claasen.**

Personal report on his time in Bandoeng from the start of the war till the Bersiap in 1945/46.

**Correspondence (written) in a folder from L.J (Bart) Bredero,** Reigersweg 57 Williamstad Curacao N.A. with Pieter Boele. Opinions and articles relating the politics surrounding the road to the independence of Indonesia. Bart was the son of the founder of Bouwbedrijf Bredero

**The Gentleman and the Ambulance** a collection of articles and letters by Bart Bredero.

**Some international reactions and comments on the bombing of New York City 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001**

**Mededelingenblad KVMO September 1995**  
**KIM Spiegel – officiële uitgave van het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Marine 42 kwartaal 1996**

De ervaringen van een adelborst gedurende de oorlog 1940-1942 (2 copies) by Pieter Boele van Hensbroek

**Belevenissen van P.R Boele van Hensbroek Adelborstenjaar 1938**

**Voordracht voor de oudste-jaars adelborsten 1 -juli 1996 – De ervaringen van een adelborst gedurende de oorlog 1940-1942 by P.R Boele van Hensbroek**